

SPECTRUM OF CIRCLES

GRIND / CRUST / HARDCORE FANZINE
13 / 2024



VVORSE
HAEXLER
UHRITOIMITUS
COLD INSIDE
ROTTEN SOUND

Fear that gives men wings

Spectrum of Circles # 1, December 2023: Aedes, Itsesaastutus, Kova Totuus, Morbific.

Spectrum of Circles # 2, December 2023: Gorekaust, Lähdön Aika, Hekatoxen, Sonic Poison

Spectrum of Circles # 3, February 2024: Soul Incursion, True Grit, Disguised Malignance, Castrated Youth

Spectrum of Circles # 4, March 2024: Hoc est Bellum, Below the Graves, Grave with a View, Skepticism

Spectrum of Circles # 5, March 2024: Azatoth, Sulfuric Cautery, Thin Line, Sacred Crucifix

Spectrum of Circles # 6, April 2024: Health Issues, Sequestrum, Cerebrum, Baron + Bloodlands, Fury of Livez

Spectrum of Circles # 7, April 2024: Taser, Gutrefaxion, Kuvotus, Ilon Lapset

Spectrum of Circles # 8, May 2024: Whisper, Haudat, Cryptic Hatred, Gray State

Spectrum of Circles # 9, July 2024: Praise, Guts, Kaivs, Sentenced

Spectrum of Circles # 10, August 2024: Necrotic Ooze, Omnivortex, No Exceptions, Savage Gospel

Spectrum of Circles # 11, September 2024: Malformed, Absolute Key, Sewer Altar, Askel

Spectrum of Circles # 12, October 2024: Cryptorium, Bombardement, Phrenetix, Thorium, Abhorration

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"Rotten Sound": Jouni Parkku
Cold Inside: Jouni Parkku

Playlist

Bathory – The Return.....
Betelzeus – Shedding the Skin
Charnel Winds – Der Teufelsbund
Concrete Winds - S/t
Cosmic Church – Absoluutin
läivistämä & Ylistys
Dipygus – Deathooze & Dipygus
Dungeon Keeper – Chaos Sorcery
Strike at Midnight
Electro Hippies – The Only Good
Punk... is a Dead One
Evoked – Warfare of the Gods
Natzahu – Under the Light
New York Against the Belzebu –
Xaninha Noise Core
Prehistoric War Cult – Barbaric
Metal
Spectral Wound – Songs of Blood
and Mire
Sworn – A Journey Told through
Fire
Tetrasigil – Forest Storm
Umbra - Delirium Mortuorum



Editorial



C

hainsaw is my god!

But to be completely honest with you, it's not grindcore at the moment that makes my life worth living. This issue is all about grindcore and crust, but during the process of putting this issue together (late-October – mid-November) I had to ask myself if I was forcing myself into doing this, which was the last thing I wanted to do with Spectrum of Circles. Fortunately, it ultimately didn't come down into that, but I admit, the thought scared me a bit.

As it is with Spectrum of Circles, every issue is formed as a result of freak accidents; plenty of interviews are in the making at the same time, and the order in which they are finished in determines which issues of Spectrum of Circles features them. That's how's it been ever since the first issue, and I have found this method both fruitful and relatively painless. Since that also dictates what bands are featured in each issue, I have not that much control over what bands actually are featured in each issue. This time that resulted in two grindcore bands, one crust punk band and one hardcore band. No intentions to have them in the same issue, and no death metal here to offer, it seems.

Even if I view Spectrum of Circles as a successor to Abhorrent Visions rather than Ajatuksen Valo, I had to realize Spectrum of Circles still seems to have quite much common with the latter. One such feature was Ajatuksen Valo's period of thematic issues (issues 6-10) which revolved around specific subject matter, such as hardcore (It's almost comical or even tragic to think that Cold Inside interview was actually featured in the first one of those theme issues, published in early 2012) or doom metal. In fact, one specific theme that I worked with was an issue centered around grindcore and crust punk, which didn't manifest itself in the form I originally intended before getting sick and tired of whole concept of theme issues. Nevertheless, I guess this is the grind/crust issue Ajatuksen Valo never had. That said, it might seem just a minor detail, but in order to spare some space, I did remove the references to Ajatuksen Valo issues from that back issue list on the left. Time to lift the curse, I think?

While this issue is mostly about grindcore, I didn't feel like listening to either genre at all while I was putting these letters, images and visions together. Instead, my noise worship altar was populated mostly with black metal records, a genre I'm an ardent advocate of. However, you haven't seen that much black metal on these pages as I haven't covered black metal that much, partly due my ever-shifting listening habits and my take on the genre – it's not just something I want to cover for the sake of covering it, but I need to feel like covering it.

That sensation gave Spectrum of Circles a page which might be closest thing to the review section this zine will ever get. Yes, I do remember that I have cursed reviews into the depths of hell in this very publication, but at the same time, I have sworn to never say never. I admit that my fear of blank spaces might have provided the trigger on a silver plate, but it was fun putting that together – literally, since some of the pieces of that page were

written separately without a specific, coherent vision in mind. There's not even an introduction! Along with the space constraints I'm not entirely happy how that page turned out, but I can live with that.

The "interview" about Rotten Sound followed pretty similar paths than the Sentenced "interview" in the issue 9, although this Rotten Sound feature was coined sometime earlier than Sentenced was. Mind you, those captions you can see in the layout are actual marketing phrases Spinefarm, Rotten Sound's record label at the time, used to promote the album. All the captions are taken straight from the Spinefarm ads from the backs of Inferno and Miasma magazines. And by the way, I have interviewed Rotten Sound in real life as well! (Ajatuksen Valo # 17, 2017).



"I don't care, I don't feel, I just cause you pain with small blades of steel."

The cover was again provided by the mighty Harri Kankaanpää. Originally there was no intention to use his work twice in a row, but he did supply me these two pieces of art a while ago before I had even given a thought when to use them. In fact, I intended to use this on the issue 12, but somehow that red pile of skulls resonated more with the contents of that issue, while this one seemed more suitable for a grindcore oriented issue. Of course one can disagree, but after all, this is all about the gut feeling, instinct, magic...

What goes around... comes around. Time to end with this murmur, again.

November 2024

-J



"Sounds kind of silly if you use the same words in every song, we've had some laughs about this and some words are "banned" because of that."

VVORSE

Vvorse is one of the better melodic crust bands – or neocrust, if you will – that emerge from Finland... not that there's too much of them to begin with. Nevertheless, I do like the way how they sound live, and they do have a somewhat impressive back catalogue. Time to have a chat with them, I think.

Hello! How are you holding up?

Hi! Fine, we're currently trying to work on the new album but things are going very slow. Hope we can start to record it as soon as possible.


First of all, I think it would be nice to have an introduction to Vvorse and it's origins. Who are you, and why you together in a group called "Vvorse"?

We are a four-piece from Jyväskylä/Finland which consists of Lauris (guitar, vox), Jussi (guitar, vox), Topi (drums) and Jaakko (bass, vox). Lauris and Topi met in the summer of 2013 and decided to try out some riffs. In the autumn we already had 2-3 songs as a duo. In 2014 we found other two members and the band was officially formed. The same year we put out our demo. Around that

time our original vocalist Manne left the band and in the fall of 2015 we recruited Jussi as a second guitarist and vocalist.

When I first learnt of the band the first thing I noticed was the band's name "Vvorse". Of course, you read it as "worse" as a comparative form of the adjective "bad", but the use of two single v-letters brings up connotations to so called "holy terror" hardcore scene, and you seem to be relatively far from that. Where lies the truth?

We sometimes get asked about that but no, we are not associated with Holy Terror. Some of us listen to Integrity and Gehenna and the thing about those bands is that we are probably influenced by their "darker hardcore sound", that's for sure.



With the band name the idea was to make it stand out a little, that's why there's two "VV". We knew that some people might get a bit confused but this isn't anything new anyway.

It seems that Vvorse has had it's 10th anniversary not too long ago? How does that feel? How do you think Vvorse has progressed during that time?

It's great. 10 years feels like ages but we still like what we are doing and there's still an interest from the members to continue.

By every record we have naturally progressed in making riffs, song structures and arrangements. Everything has become a little bit more difficult/technical in a way. Pretty much every new record has gone a notch up in quality.

The band name is in English, but you do write in Finnish. Have you ever considered writing in English? I don't recall seeing any published Vvorse songs written in English.

Around the same time as we started, Topi suggested that we would write lyrics in Finnish. So it has stayed that way ever since. However we have one song in Swedish on the demo and a few lines and a song title in Latvian on the latest record.

Some native Finnish-speaking lyricists deem Finnish as a difficult language to write. Yes, Finnish is one hell of a language to master, but have you ever found using Finnish difficult?

It's definitely hard but somehow we've managed so far. None of us isn't really the main lyricist so we've been trying to make them together as a group. Lauris writes his lyrics in English and rest of the band translates them and make them fit the song, that sort of adds and extra twist to our writing process. Sometimes some parts can get lost in translation but usually we manage to keep the essential message intact.

How do you avoid the pitfalls in lyric-writing? Are there such pitfalls in existence? Are they related to language or some other factors?

That's why we work together, we want to make sure that we all get the right vibe of the lyrics and nothing shitty or stupid gets through to the final versions. We don't want to be too straight forward with our lyrics as that can make it sound a bit naive sometimes. One pitfall can be getting stuck on same words or metaphors and that should be avoided. Sounds kind of silly if you use the same words in every song, we've had some laughs about this and some words are "banned" because of that, hehe.

How do you approach songwriting? Do you intentionally create melodic crust or is it something that comes up naturally?

Lauris comes up with the most of riffs and ideas of structures and then we collectively arrange them into songs. Because of the musical influences we have, the songs we make come out naturally and we have kind of developed this "common understanding" within our band that all of us know pretty much what a song by us should sound like.

When I first saw you perform live it reminded my clearly of Tragedy. Not only the musical side is pretty, let's say "tragedyesque", but also having two persons on a guitar with a long-haired bassist in the middle also reminds you of Burdette-Lorrain-Davis trio you can see at Tragedy show. I know it's mostly coincidental, but is it just a coincidence?

Tragedy is definitely one of the bands that have influenced us! The stage positioning is a coincidence, and has been that way pretty much since Jussi joined the band. At that point Jaakko didn't do any vocals so we decided to have the vocalists on the sides and Jaakko in the middle. He's also big and tall and fits well as a center piece!

You operate from Jyväskylä, a city with a vibrant music scene. For some reason, people associate Jyväskylä with crust punk, even going as far as declaring Jyväskylä as a "crust capital of Finland", according to some messages at Punk in Finland message board. Yeah yeah, you can write anything to Internet, but also I have had this gut feeling that Jyväskylä and crust punk is a match made in heaven even without anyone online claiming that. What do you think?

Honestly, we don't think about it like that, neither we declare that we are the capital or whatsoever that is above others. Only thing that there is, is that there is huge variety of different genres and quality music coming out from this place considering the size of this town.

How do people perceive melodic neocrust nowadays? There seemed to be a trend "some" (probably 20) years ago, but currently there's not that much bands to come by who are labeled as neocrust. When a band like that pops out, it tends to stand out.

In Finland there aren't many bands of that type and yes, that genre kind of died out 15 years ago more or less in the rest of the world as well. At our shows the audience is very mixed and weirdly the people who are more into other genres like metal and sludge of example, tend to like our music. Makes sense? (I think it does. -Ed.)

"Kurjien elegia" had a vinyl version released thru Genet Records. How did that turn out? They did release Finnish hardcore way back in the 90s, but also Gray State's "Under the Wheels of Progress" came through them.

Bruno from Genet sent us a message on Facebook where he told us he liked "Kurjien Elegia". It sort of evolved from there, a thousand messages and bad jokes later they released the vinyl version! The LP's turned out really nice, three different colour variations and all. Good quality press also!

I also got the assumption that Genet's collaboration didn't only result with "Kurjien elegia" LP, but some shows in Europe, as well? Ieperfest among them?

It was part of the release deal that we would play Ieperfest. We managed to arrange a mini tour around the fest and played also in Antwerp, Brugge and Hengelo. A nice trip, nice people and a lot of driving! Bruno was very helpful and his contacts got us the Antwerp and Brugge shows.

I guess I have nothing else to ask at this moment. Feel free to say if there was something you wanted to say. Thanks for the interview!

Thanks mate! All the best to anyone who reads this, see you at the shows! SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BANDS!





"[Songs] that express all the necessary things in about 45 seconds, without any bling bling. Just raw energy for some seconds that makes you smile."

I'm open to admit that Commodore PET computer on the cover of "Wage, Work" album by Haexler was the first thing that caught my eye when I was browsing the selection of Gate of Deliria distro. Despite my love for Commodore computers I'm not sure if it even was love at first sight, since I recall putting the record back into the bin, only to purchase it later. What can I say about the album? It's short, pissed off modern grindcore album with songs about work... but we did discuss GDR and some tv shows, as well.

Haexler was formed in 2019. I don't think that Haexler is a band that many of our readers know, I guess the basic introduction and brief history of the band should take place here.


Hey Jouni! First of all – thank you so much for getting in touch and giving our little band to chance to answer your kind and well thought out questions. This means a lot!

We are Haexler from Leipzig, East Germany and we play powerviolence together since 2019. "Blankness, Bleakness" and "Wage, Work" are the titles of the two EPs that we have released since then. You can find at least the

second one on all common streaming platforms, but both together are up on our bandcamp. Here is the link and we would love if you would take some time to check it out: <https://haexler.bandcamp.com>

We are four friends that are deep into short songs and a lot of snare drums: Daniel sings, Marv plays guitar, Niels plays bass and Schulle is the drummer.

The Idea to form a band came to life in late 2018, when Schulle and Marv met at a friend's barbecue evening and quickly started randomly to talk about blast beats. Around the same period of time, Marv and Niels knew each other already and talked about the same important topic quite a



few times, also Niels and Schulle played already together in a black metal band. We quickly started to write the first two songs as a three piece in January 2019. Niels played together with Daniel in the hardcore band 20 Liter Yoghurt, knew that he was also interested in fast music so he joined a practice very soon, everyone felt that it somehow fits and the rest is history.

We played our first show at a DIY-Festival in Grimma in August 2019, in February 2020 we released our first EP "Blankness Bleakness" and managed to play three more shows and had big plans for touring, then Covid hit right after. After a six month long break of rehearsals, we had a lot of energy and ideas that were put into the songs of "Wage Work" that was released in November 2022. Simultaneously we started properly touring in early 2022. We played a lot of shows in the Czech Republic and also a couple of Shows in Germany. Our first European Tour later happened in the first half of 2023. Additionally we played many shows in Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria and so on. Right now we are back from our second European tour which brought us to Greece and back north again and we're very grateful for all the experiences we were able to make.

After this second tour we took (or currently take) a small break from live shows to focus on writing our third EP. The recordings should take place in the beginning of 2025 and let's see how our journey will continue from there on.

What kind of a musical approach you aimed for when you started the band? Is it different from the one you have now?

There never was some kind of approach to play a specific genre, it more came in naturally. We aimed to create a brutal sounding punk and hardcore mixture and add blast beats whenever it could be possible. Everybody in the band loved and knew the term powerviolence back then and for sure had the wish in mind to do something similar, but at the same time we did not want to limit ourselves. And to be completely honest - Magrundergrind's yellow album was and is the ultimate GOAT that made us wanting to play in some kind of fast band.

What do you require from grindcore? What makes a grindcore great, and what aspects of it you particularly find fulfilling? What is your ideal grindcore album like?

Everyone of us likes different aspects of grindcore of course. The most common agreement is that those songs are our favourites that express all the necessary things in about 45 seconds, without any bling bling. Just raw energy for some seconds that makes you smile.

To my ears, Haexler seems to be mostly about grindcore. While you can hear that you might have spinned some records with "powerviolence" tag in it, I can still see "Wage, Work" primarily as a grindcore album. How do you feel powerviolence is present in your music?

Maybe it is just us to call it powerviolence hahaha. To be honest once again, for us it's hard to name certain parts being either powerviolence or grindcore. Possibly the caveman vocals are an important part of our powerviolence identity as well as the mixing of fast punk with grindcore or hardcore elements and making the songs as short as somehow possible. When we initially wrote the songs, we did not incorporate special parts just to be true to the powerviolence DNA. We just wrote the songs as we liked them. Other reviews of Haexler emphasized our roots even in hardcore or punk. Maybe it's the focus of the recipient that defines the genre.

I got interested of Haexler due to your album "Wage, Work", which has lyrics involved around modern-day worklife. Do you see it as a concept album? What do you think of concept albums as... well, a concept?

Yeah it definitely is! Even if the term "concept EP" sounds pompous, because at the end of the day we still play powerviolence, each track on our second EP deals with a concrete manifestation and thus also disgustingness of the working world in late capitalism in the age of Industry 4.0.

"Wage, Work" stands for the unconditional connection of the work to be done in order to receive financial means for it - for most of us too little to live, too much to die.

And to be honest we never really talked about concept albums as a concept; for our singer Daniel who comes up with the lyrical ideas it seemed to be a good solution to be able to make a message clearer and work more focused.. and to be honest, it kinda makes sense when you have a whole 9 minutes to make your point straight. It's just that where other bands can't finish one song in that time, we do 13 ;)

What prompted to approach the subject of work in the first place and dedicate the full album to it? How it did started to get a form? Was it a focused effort right from the start?

The crucial point that we wanted to make is that in most cases it is not even the work itself that is the problem, but its purpose, namely the generation of profit at the expense of others, and its concrete form, which in turn results directly from the omnipresent capitalist constraints.

Central to this is the absolute impossibility of escaping it for any length of time. It doesn't matter at all whether you are employed by a huge corporation or a supposedly sympathetic family business, or freelanced while still depending on them either directly or indirectly - you are part of global capitalism, whether you like it or not, and you contribute to its stabilization through your exploitation.

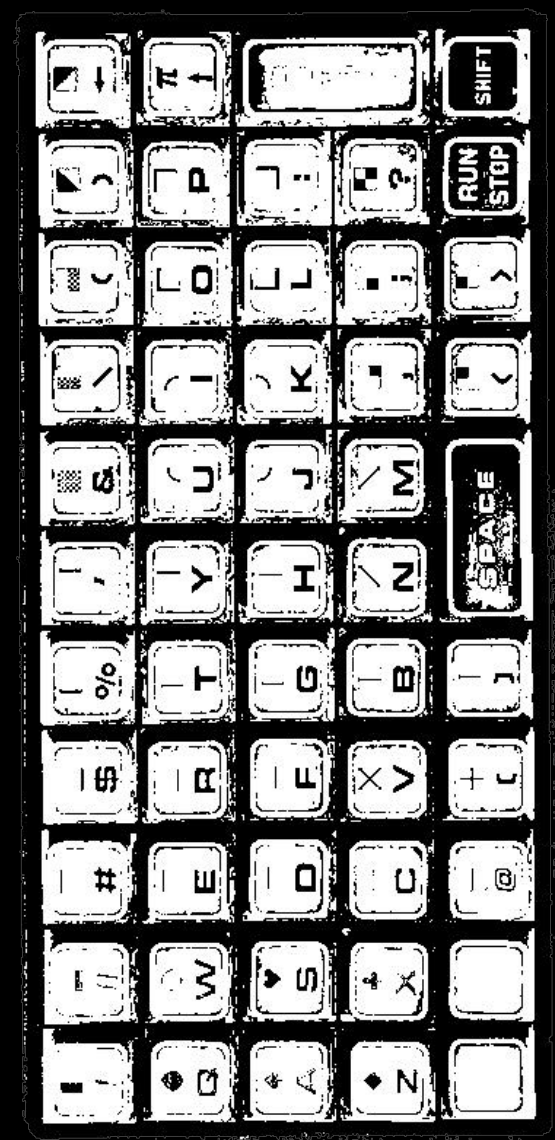
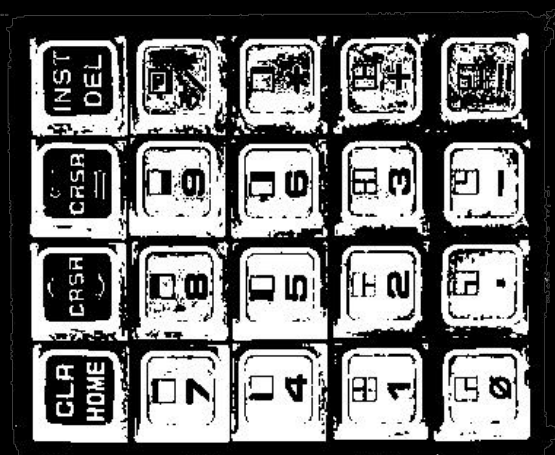
So as we're all politically involved in one way or the other and especially Daniel is into political theory it just makes sense.. and it's definitely a topic which makes you angrier the longer you think about it.

Where does the lyrics stem from? Your personal experiences or those around you? Watching the news... everything I just mentioned?

Mostly from going through the world with open eyes as a political active person trying to make sense of it all - and that through the lense of Historical Materialism.

Haexler is situated in Leipzig, which was formerly a part of German Democratic Republic - East Germany. I got the impression that while GDR state was dissolved over three decades ago, it's legacy still exists in eastern parts of Germany. How much that does hold true? Does it affect Haexler as a band? Are you old enough to remember anything of it?

For Haexler the heritage of the GDR is - as for many young people - not present anymore. The problems that we are concerned about are much more global. There is still an impact on people of the former GDR of course, especially on people who lived their important years in GDR. But the way the people deal with that heritage is very different. Many people who experienced the GDR regime and all the daily struggles they had to fight in the GDR don't want anything back. However there are also many people who experienced the end of the GDR as a



shock. Just imagine: everything that they created and worked for was worth nothing within just a moment. Therefore also many people dream of the "good old days" (there was even a word created for that: "Ostalgie").

Another and much more serious problem is the deeply-rooted racism which was also widespread in the former region of GDR. Even if antifascism and antiracism were reason of state back then, in reality there was a big problem with racism and neonazism in the GDR that was never seriously count. Because of that, the organized neo-nazis in the early 90s had easy play to organize the young and desperate people there. Right-wing ideologies are anchored in many eastern German people's identities and are also given to the next generation.

Just one of us is old enough to remember life in the GDR. Marv was born in 1977. He was twelve years old when the wall went down. He remembers to have a good childhood but there was also always the certainty that you can't travel where you want to. He remembers that some of his classmates whose parents wanted to leave the GDR were excluded from activities of their class. In the school there was a ban on talking about western media (that btw. everyone watched) and western toys or even western patches or pens were prohibited. He also remembers that one couldn't buy everything you wanted. Even buying a jeans was a problem. Also extreme environmental pollution was visible everywhere. The topics that are important for kids we guess... :D

But it's also a topic that we talk about to each other and are not always of the same opinion. Daniel for example, who was born 6 years after the GDR ended to exist, sees it more as a "what could have been" type of thing and is interested in the attempt to see it from the historical-materialist point of view, which isn't that easy because, as we know, history is always written by the winners. But he thinks for example it's been an important attempt to learn (especially the many wrongdoings) from for further non-capitalist societies and it's also ok to acknowledge to honor the attempt to found a state through the same people that were able to escape the gas chambers. Things that are not often talked about is that the de-nazification, although not perfect, was way more thorough in East than in West Germany and that the so called reunification was a big step back for women's reproductive rights, that the pure existence of the GDR had a huge impact on the welfare policies of the western part, that there was no homelessness and many things more.. It's important to regard the things that went wrong in the context of the time and the inner and outer circumstances.

I kind of repeat the previous question, but let's shift focus to "Wage, Work" and it's lyrical concepts. Does the shadow of GDR linger above the work-life lyrical focus or affect the perspective that record represents?

Not only the shadow of the GDR but yeah, of course when you criticize the conditions of the way of production in the capitalist societies, you automatically get to think about possible alternatives.

All of the samples are taken from the series "Peaky Blinders". I haven't seen the show, but I'm under the impression that it's relatively far from present-day worklife, considering the show is set into the late 1910s and the 1920s and depicting the lives of career criminals. However, it is surprising how well they fit into the context of "Wage, Work", also taking a sheer number of those samples into account. Do you see any parallels between the two?

Thomas Shelby might possibly be the most popular representative of "you missed the point if you idolize

them" at that point of time so it was an easy decision to go with him and you may never forget that this is all fiction. :) We'd say the structures pictured in the series are the same as they are now and that is what makes it so interesting. Capitalism is a structural system and it goes on and on and on even if it changes its face. There may be more workplace-rules now but people still get exploited. Unionists might not get killed anymore (at least in this part of the world) but union busting still is a thing. If you have the means of production, you have everything. Politicians in most cases might not be as openly corrupt and criminal, but behind closed doors a good amount are.

The album cover is a collage of various pieces of modern work equipment – computer units and screens. There's also an excavator and set of wheels – a common sight in worker-focused concepts – but those screens still seem to dominate the scene.

Our aim was to morph it all together a bit and to show that the structures we're forced to work under are the same whether you're working in the first, second or tertiary sector. The face of the working class isn't only the white factory worker anymore.

On the center there's a glimpse of Commodore PET unit. I got to admit, that caught my eye and got my interest among the pile of all the other black and white album covers it was buried with. Do you have a special relationship with Commodore PET or other Commodore computers? If you ask me, Commodore 64 reigns eternally.

There is no special connection to the Commodore or some hidden statement coming up with it. According to Marv, the C64 is the first computer he ever saw back in 1987 (Me as well, though I was an infant at that point. -Ed.). Good old times!

Back to Leipzig. What kind of a city it is to live as a grindcore band? Is there a local scene?

Leipzig has a really big and diverse music scene. It is hard to put into words and at some evening even harder to decide which of the six different concerts one should attend that are happening at the exact same time.

There are a lot of bands, venues and people that are interested in punky and fast stuff. Grindcore-wise there are for sure awesome bands from the city and the region but we see ourselves more as a part of the whole antifascist DIY scene and therefore do not want to break it down to just one small aspect.

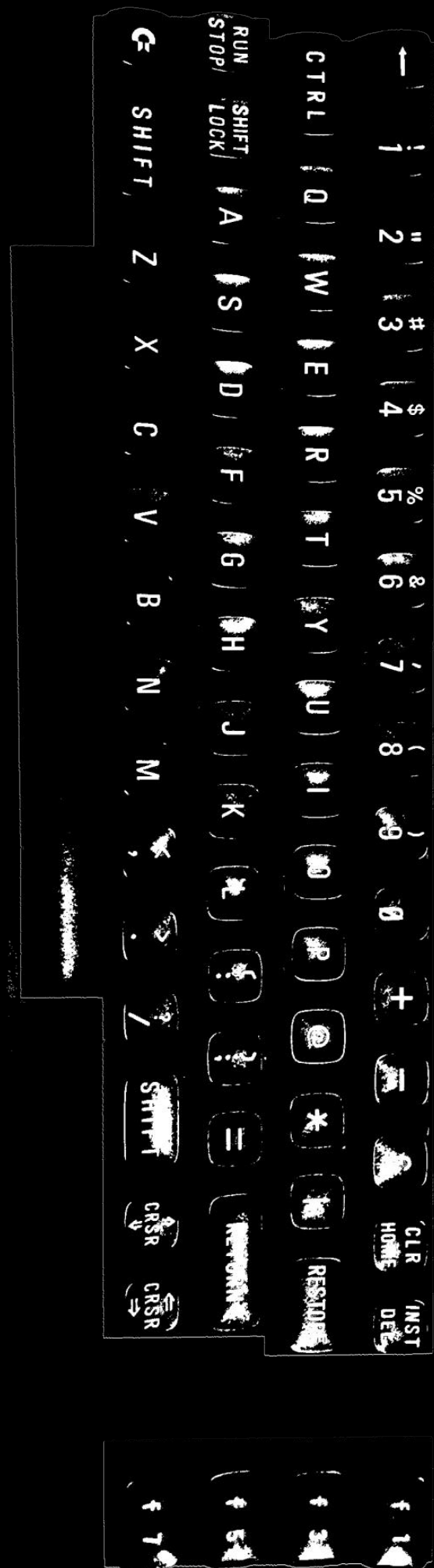
We can say that the Blast Beat is alive and well here.

You seem to enjoy getting out of Leipzig, too, considering you seem to tour a lot. What do you "get" from touring? Do you find them easy to arrange, given that a tour of only a few dates in nearby cities could be either piece of cake or a living nightmare.

For us – touring is about the love and dedication to play live concerts. Sharing our music and energy with other people is an integral part of our band. On top of that, we all enjoy spending time together as well as traveling and are curious to meet new people, new cities and new venues.

So far it hasn't been that hard to find shows. European DIY is also alive and well as far as we know it for now. And yea, we are easy to handle and don't have high expectations on the organizers.

Speaking of nightmares and getting back to work, is it easy for you to get some free time for touring from





" In our opinions, there are much better german TV-Novellas as for example "Auf Achse", "Lindenstraße" or " Der Bergdoktor" (than "Marienhof")."

your work or your other daily activities and obligations?

Going back to work is never easy!

Communication seems to be the key to ensure that traveling continues to be a positive experience. Each of us has more than one hobby and we are all involved in other projects. One of us has two children and is only available in even calendar weeks – for all the bookers out there. ;) As you can imagine, it's easy to throw a drum set and a few amps in the van, but there's still a lot to check in advance to make sure the dates are cool for all of us. However, our shared commitment to playing live makes it very easy.

We already discussed "Peaky Blinders", but there's another TV show I wanted to discuss with you. So, what is your opinion of Marienhof, as Germans? The reason I ask is not only the spectacular theme song "Es Wird Viel Passieren" (I had that as my ringtone for a while), but the prime reason being that it was broadcast in Finland in the 90s and early 2000s. The reason that show resonates with Finnish millennials is the fact it was being broadcast on weekday afternoons, usually right before or after something more interesting was coming up (Jyrki! for an example, which was a popular Finnish music TV show aimed at teenagers and young adults)... and not too long ago I publicly promised to inquire about this subject from every German band I'll interview. So, what's your take?

"It was being broadcast on weekday afternoons, usually

right before or after something more interesting was coming up." You already nailed it perfectly! This should be the only reason why this show was that popular. In our opinions, there are much better german TV-Novellas as for example "Auf Achse", "Lindenstraße" or " Der Bergdoktor". And you should never forget: There is no blast beat in the theme song.

Was there anything you wanted to add? Thanks for the interview!

The whole DIY bubble and everything that comes with it is just made possible by the people that keep the spirit up. We so love to be part of it and want to send our love to all the people that keep the flame burning. We hope to see all of you guys sooner or later.

Love and solidary greetings from Leipzig!
Haexler

Black metal tyranny

Kratti, a screaming ghost that lies on top of buried treasures, guarding them, is a figure in Finnish mythology. It is also a name for a Finnish black metal band, which, in turn, embraces tradition. You can hear the echoes of Finnish black metal with certain production values, "back to basics" approach to songwriting but with a strong sense of melody. Kratti might not be doing anything too fancy or too spectacular, even the synths are used sparingly. Comparisons to early "self-titled era" Emperor and to some renowned mid-00s Finnish black metal bands might not be too far-fetched, partly due to the dry soundscape of "Matka kohti kosmista"?

I was impressed already with "Demo 2023" and it's Taste-era Moonbloodish demeanor, and "Matka kohti kosmista" is certainly one of my album favorites of the year 2024. You can hear the progression between the recordings with stronger focus on melodies and top of all, the songwriting you could describe as "catchy" or "enchanting".

Spectral Wound (which I constantly confuse with Spectral Voice, which is in entirely different ballpark) is one of those bands who are worshipped and praised by many, but sometimes you just can't ignore the power of their recorded work, with "The Songs of Blood and Mire" being a fine example. "A Diabolic Thirst" was convincing piece of work already, but time will tell which of those albums will be held as a classic.

The soundscape of "The Songs of Blood and Mire" remind me of Behexen's "By the Blessing of Satan" (one of the best Finnish black metal albums, if you ask me); straight-up punch to the face of Christianity. Crystal clear, cold as ice and extravagantly violent. Conversely, some subtle hints of traditional heavy metal are also present. With as much originality such as these albums do showcase, I can't really blame people for being under the spell of Spectral Wound.

Speaking of Behexen, Bosnia's **Sulphuric Night** has achieved something on "Black Metal Tyranny" 7" rarely a band achieves; the atmosphere, the spirit and songwriting are not this much comparable with those of Sargeist and their "Disciple of the Heinous Path" album in particular, an often overlooked black metal gem in my books. Also the outlook on the EP makes you wonder if Finnish bands have served some deeper inspiration than merely just musical inspirations? Whatever the case, I found "Black Metal Tyranny" an enchanting record in it's own right. There's only two songs, but they both stand boldly, and I have listened to this record some half a dozen times already. If you paid attention to the headline, they might have made an impression?

When it comes to impressions and finding your path aligning with those that's already been laid by the masters, I couldn't help but find similarities with classic Darkthrone albums when I was listening to New York's **Fellwinter**. Of course, pigeonholing Fellwinter solely into the never-ending flock of mindless Darkthrone worshippers doesn't really justice to them, as Fellwinter seems to have more in common with the early phases of bands like Armagedda or Katharsis. Not only their recorded work is well-executed and tapped straight into the source of true essence of black metal, they have a touch of their own, characterized by occasional somber passages that offer some much needed balance in their black terror.





"Let out some steam and drill a hole in your skull. Still I'd rather let out steam by playing grindcore."

There are multiple ways to create grindcore and write songs about Finnish history. Uhrtoimitus is a one-person unit of Tomi Salmela making noise and actually being quite unique at that, with everything considered.

Hi. How is life treating you?

Hello Jouni!

Life is, well, normal. Ups and downs. All good. At the time of writing these answers I just finished recording the new Uhrtoimitus full length. It's gonna be called "Veripilvi". Like always, recording and mixing DIY all the way.

Not many of our readers know Uhrtoimitus, so could you give a brief history of it?

Summer of 2023 I sat down and started recording some total "fuck you" music as a one man band. Started out as noisecore but mutated into something a bit more coherent. So far three ep's, the first two released on cd by the wonderful people of Everydayhate and Esagoya records.

I'm under the impression that Uhrtoimitus started as a splinter group or as a solo project, originating from Fading Trail. Fading Trail is also a grindcore band, although the approach to grindcore is somewhat different. More death metallic, I'd say? Was it your intention to gain distance from Fading Trail musically or perhaps even spiritually?

It wasn't so much wanting to gain distance from Fading Trail, but just wanting to make some chaotic stuff with Finnish vocals. Fading Trail is definitely more death metallic and has those slow grooves that stem from my love for bands like Crowbar.

As opposed to being one part of the band, what do you "get" from doing pretty similar music as a solo act? What are the pros and cons in that?

The pros are, I don't have to teach the songs to anyone and the recording process is super quick. In fact I should put out a release every month, but I guess I'm lazy. The con is that because it's a one man band, there's none of the enjoyment of playing with other people.

What is the current situation of Fading Trail at the moment? I couldn't really fathom whether the band is still active or not?

F.T. is active. Playing random gigs and figuring out the release of a new EP. People have families and jobs so it's not that easy to play as often as we should. But that's the way it is.

There's a considerable noise influence in Uhrtoimitus. How integral part you think noise is of Uhrtoimitus? Is it just something supplementary or something you set your full attention to?

Noise is definitely an integral part. Ever since seeing Merzbow at Avanto festival back in the day and digging deep into weird and brutal electronic music, I've had that "noise tumor" in my brain. I'm probably going to do an EP of nothing but noise under Uhrtoimitus name and just put it on Bandcamp for free.

What methods you use to create those noise elements? Is it digital noise or do you put effort in producing it, eg. Tape loops, effects pedals, contact mics or something else the noise wizards out there utilize?

So far all the noise has been made "in the box". Just using random sound material and running it through different distortions until it sounds just right, or should I say wrong. I have analog gear also and will use it in the future.



Fusing grindcore or powerviolence or any other fast-paced, rock-based music with noise is usually a game of hits or misses, I think Uhrtoimitus got that right; the noise element is a vital part of the soundscape, but it doesn't completely take over it or make it a total mess, either.

I'm glad to hear that. The noise tracks should be condensed when they are in between the songs so they don't cut the flow. That's why I need to release an EP dedicated to noise so you can take it or leave it. I have hours of brutal soundscapes on my hard drive.

For some, or perhaps for obvious reasons I could hear a significant Rotten Sound influence in your work, "Exit" and "Cycles" era Rotten Sound in particular. Not only the song structures and the overall feel, but also your vocals somehow remind me of K's vocalization. Also, there is some play on ambience and stuff on "Exit", similar with Uhrtoimitus. What do you think?

There must be a subconscious R.S. influence always. The kings of finnish grind! As for my vocals, that's the sound that just comes out when I scream. But it's a compliment to be compared to them. I think "Abuse to Suffer" is one of the best sounding albums ever. So heavy and dirty. Now I have to spin the good old "Psychotic Veterinarian" med! (O-ou. -Ed.)

I stumbled upon a Uhrtoimitus flyer by Esagoya and Everydayhate which promoted Uhrtoimitus as "northern noisegrind". Regardless if that description is written by you or the label person, how do you think it holds true and describes Uhrtoimitus? I'm looking at that "northern" bit in particular; from non-Finnish point of view, almost everything Finnish is "northern", but in Finland we tend not only to associate that more to Oulu region and the regions north from there, but also a certain mindset or a way to look at the world. Something a band like Sentenced would do! Do you think you have something that could be described as a "northern mindset", whatever that is? Does that determine your approach to songwriting?

I think the Northern Noisegrind moniker is cool. Whatever people want to call it. You could say I have a "northern mindset". I'm not the most talkative person and don't enjoy large groups of people. Also, getting drunk is fun, in moderation.

Does Uhrtoimitus have a specific concept or image? A specific idea where you want to take Uhrtoimitus, what it would sound and look like, and what lyrical concepts and themes you focus on?

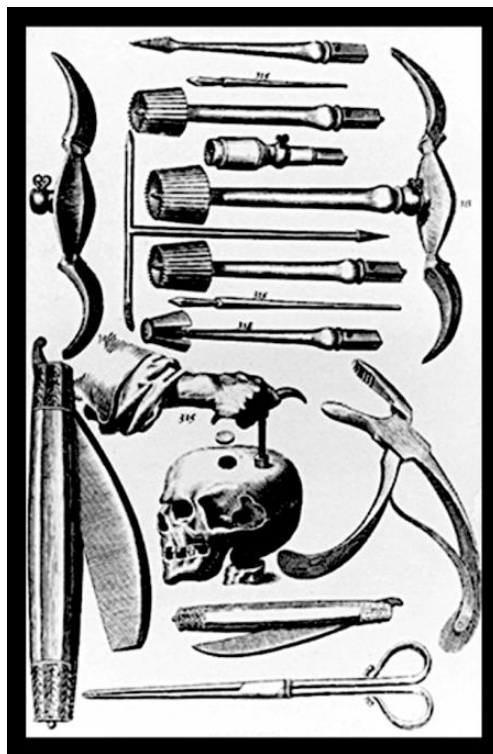
Not a specific concept. Just keep pouring things like crime, cult leaders, politicians, substance abuse and such into a grinder and see what comes out. Also the blunt black and white imagery suits this stuff, so I don't think that will change.

I couldn't help but notice the familiar faces on the front cover of your first EP. Those are mugshots of suspected culprits of the infamous "Tattarisuo case" of early 30s, which started with the findings of human remains in the swamps of Tattarisuo in Northern Helsinki. It's possibly the most famous criminal case of Finland's first decades of independence, nowadays largely forgotten, but at least the "jäljet johtavat syytöstehtäseen" phrase is still in common use in Finnish language. Do you find that incident... inspirational? If I'm judging the songtitles correctly, you seem to have referenced to that case in your work. Is also the band name, Uhrtoimitus (roughly translated as "Sacrifice offering" in English) a reference to that incident?

I just find the Tattarisuo case fascinating in it's grimness and the occultism involved in it. Also the historic aspect, like how there used to be a train that carried the bodies from the Harju morgue straight to Malmi cemetery. And I've always lived not far away from Tattarisuo. Years ago I went and tried to find the exact spot where the rituals happened. There's a water intake structure on the spot, but still it was a weird feeling standing there. And the name Uhrtoimitus definitely is a reference.

On the "Valtion omaisuutta" cover there's an image from Finnish museum of crime, with the skeletal remains of Matti Haapoja on display. Haapoja committed murders in the late 19th century, but as it was common during that era with individuals like him, his remains were handed over to the government for the research purposes. He was put on display in the 1930s and remained there until he was interred in a family grave in 1995, a century after his initial parting from life. What thoughts that sparks in you? Which fascinates you more; the life and "career" of Haapoja, or his "life" after his death?

What can I say, Haapoja is a finnish "classic". An impulsive knife wielder. It's interesting to think what drove him to



that life. That photo is just so striking, I had to use it. I think everyone's remains deserve a proper resting place, even a homicidal maniac like Haapoja.

Keeping in mind that grindcore, death metal and other forms of extreme music have always had fascination towards serial killers and bizarre crimes. Is your focus on these figures we have your take on the subject?

The subject matter just suits this kind of music. I have to point out that I'm not a fan of serial killers and criminals in general. I don't glorify death and I hope for minimal amount of suffering in the world. This kind of shit just goes on in the world, always has and always will. I've always had an unhealthy interest in the darker side of humans. As a kid reading those Alibi magazine reports on drunken manslaughters and psychopaths was way more scary than any horror movie. Also the classic "Poliisi kertoo" books. (These books are often overshadowed by Alibi magazines in reputation, but they are relatively easy to find from flea markets. -Ed.)

"True crime" is a popular genre of entertainment these days. Biographies by such figures such as Mika "Immu" Ilmén and Late Johansson are popular, so are podcasts dealing with criminal history, and so on. Do these modern-day criminals inspire in a way these "classics of the genre" do?

No, there's none of the gritty atmosphere and mystique of the old cases, so the modern day crimes don't inspire that much. The modern day charlatans and politicians on the other hand do. For example, listening to a jackass like Kari Wahlroos talk his multi-level marketing bullshit is great entertainment.

How about your latest work, "Paine"? You could think it is related to mental health issues, with the trepanation toolkit neatly pictured on the cover...

It definitely deals with mental health problems among other things. The title is a kind of humorous reference to trepanation. Let out some steam and drill a hole in your skull. Still I'd rather let out steam by playing grindcore.

I reckon you are familiar with the Pälkäne case, although no criminal activity was surrounding that, but from the moral perspective it's entirely another issue. Somehow I could easily imagine Uhrtoimitus dealing with that?

Yes, that's something to deal with in the future. Thanks for the idea! Another case of Finns being racially profiled, like the discrimination the Finnish immigrants faced in USA back in the day. It's a good thing those skulls were returned and got a proper resting place.

Do you deal with other subjects? There are no lyrics available, but for an example, most of the tracks of the first EP could be interpreted to have connections to the Tattarisuo case in a way or another... but on the other hand (no pun intended), there are tracks like "Paskakratia" which conceptually fit more into political grindcore tradition, I think?

The recording of the music and writing lyrics is always super fast, so they are like flashes of different things. When I record vocals, I have things scribbled down and often just come up with stuff on the spot. Also I try to pronounce the words almost incomprehensibly because personally I don't like the idea of someone preaching in my ear on top of music. I've never really cared about the lyrics of bands that much.

How do you think grindcore fares today in Finland? What do you think of it now?

Grindcore will always fare good everywhere, because it's totally about passion. You don't make this kind of noise for financial benefit, that's for sure. Endless love for the people that keep grinding.

I guess I don't have anything else to ask. I present my gratitude for this interview. Thank you.

Thank you and all the best!



Me, Ossi & Psychotic Veterinarian



Or how two millennial metalheads stopped worrying and shared their love for Rotten Sound and "Psychotic Veterinarian".

The original aim of the discussion was to celebrate "Psychotic Veterinarian" and "Psychotic Veterinarian" only, but as it turned out, we couldn't let their other work ("Murderworks" and "Exit" albums in particular) and Rotten Sound's legacy left untouched.

Hello Ossi! How are you doing?

Hey Jouni! I'm hanging in here. To get on the topic, I haven't really thought about or listened to Rotten Sound recently, to be honest... checked out and enjoyed their latest album "Apocalypse" a year and a half ago, but that's about it? On a slightly related note, though, I was just last night seeing ...and Oceans, another fine band that has its roots in the 90's Ostrobothnian underground. Mika of Rotisko used to be their bass player for years, former aO vocalist Kena wrote some lyrics for "Drain", and so forth... That old Vaasa area scene is very dear to me, from Cartilage to Throes of Dawn, and all those bands were related in one way or another, of corpse. But perhaps that's enough sidetracking for starters!

Well, that was certainly a more abrupt leap into the deep end than I expected! I think we'll get back on those topics a bit later on... but the reason I'm writing you is your relationship with Rotten Sound

and "Psychotic Veterinarian" in particular! I recall seeing your rants about that recording something like almost 20 years ago on one particular message board that's been long buried under the ruins. We didn't know each other then, but some rants and posts just stick... If my memory serves me right, I recall you being psyched about early Rytmihäiriö as well and their "comeback album" "Saatana on herra", but I think we should just stick with Rotten Sound?

Ah, you must be referring to the Reverend Bizarre message board on Hellride Music, where I was actively posting around 2005-07... quite an interesting community it was in those days, and I can totally relate to certain posts and discussions just sticking with you, heh. At least I recall someone with the username Chainsaw Is God registering on the forum (Was that you?), which inspired some obsessing over the early Rotten Sound material in particular...

Those formative teenage years of the early 2000's were times of constant discovery of both genre classics and largely forgotten underground curiosities, and characterized by a feverish search for extremities. So perhaps it's no wonder that I found myself fascinated with grindcore and doom metal alike. In the case of grind, Nasum was the band that first began showing me the way, and Rotten Sound soon followed, quite naturally so, being the Finnish equivalent.

My first proper encounters with Rotisko must've been around 2002-03, when I was on 9th grade. "Murderworks" was the latest album at the time, but the band seemed to be in touch with their crustier roots as well, as I recall them having tracks such as "Tautinen äpärrä" up for download on their website... and the EP compilation "From Crust 'til Grind" came out in 2003, wrapping up all of the band's early stuff in one package. If my memory serves, Tomppa (Itsesaastutus) and Tomi (You Can't Keep Me Down, Ecotage) traveled from Lohja to Helsinki to see Rotten Sound live at Nosturi around that time. They returned with reports of having heard "Koiranyrjö" live, as well as the "From Crust 'til Grind" CD, which was then naturally copied to friends... I think I still have that CD-R! As the compilation opens with the "Psychotic Veterinarian" material, those songs made a strong impression from the get-go.

My long-time Rytmihäiriö obsession did indeed begin around the same time, as I got my hands on another piece of Finnish grindcore history excavated in 2003, their early works compilation "Surman vuodet - The Homicide Years". As the band had recently started their new run with Une on vocals, "Saatana on herra" became a hugely anticipated and celebrated record for me, no exaggeration. Still love it. But yes, I could easily rant about Rytmis for an entire zine's worth, so best to get back to the band we were actually supposed to talk about, haha!

Yeah, that exact message board. I do remember that username, but it wasn't mine. I did have postcount of something like four digits, but I can't confirm that for obvious reasons. If you stepped out of Revered Bizarre subforum for a while, you would soon find Rich Walker yelling at clouds and Chris Barnes (not the one with death metal past, present and the future?) trying to calm things down. What a time to be alive.

My investigation into Rytmihäiriö and Rotten Sound are pretty similar. I did actually borrow that same "Surman vuodet" compilation from my local library and burnt a CD-R copy of... I think there was some obscure stuff by them that wasn't present on their any other releases? Anyway, I did expect "Saatana on herra" a lot. That's 20 years ago on next February, by the way!

And speaking of early 2005, I think Rotten Sound's "Exit" was released then as well. That's the album I was really looking forward into. I have to admit, my taste for grindcore wasn't on a master level back then. Of course I was nuts about Napalm Death, but then again, To Separate the Flesh from the Bones project was one of my top picks of grindcore back then... and even Lakupaavi. As I said, what a time to be alive. I didn't get exposed to Nasum until a bit later on, tho.

It was around then when I got into Rotten Sound. As I said, I really waited for the release date of "Exit" only to NOT buying the album when it came out. As a

teenage metalhead you weren't actually swimming in coins like Uncle Scrooge (that didn't stop me from carrying my hard-earned allowance into two antique stores in Hämeenlinna, Poppa Joe and Don King), so you didn't buy everything, you know what I'm saying?

Most of the budding Lohja underground generation of the time was momentarily raving over the "For Those About to Rot" EP by To Separate the Flesh from the Bones, after the local Sokos started getting rid of their copies for 1 euro each! But yeah, the Finnish grindcore scene was so small and marginal back then - or still is, you could say - that coming across anything even remotely grinding from these parts felt exciting... I spent countless hours scouring through Mikseri.net, and there were some gems to be found, such as Deapre from Helsinki and Hate from Kotka (I Want Death!!!).

Indeed, the number of original records that you could afford was highly limited, especially for those of us who never even bothered to get a summer job... Discovering online distros such as Firebox and Combat Rock at least expanded the available selection to cover many sorts of underground obscurities that would've otherwise remained way out of reach after the closing of Carrock, Lohja's only record store, in the early 2000s. And considering these limiting circumstances, it was quite random which albums exactly you ended up purchasing, while constantly discovering new exciting stuff online, or based on what you read in music mags like Inferno and Sue or heard in specialized radio programs, primarily Metalliliitto.

Like the tape-trading generation before us, we naturally copied whatever interesting material we could get our hands on through friends or the library. We were in a more convenient position than our predecessors, though, as CD-Rs and MP3s at least enabled the easy looping of "You Suffer"... or "Veenom" and "Burtsum", as we're talking about Rotten Sound. For those of us who really got caught in the trap of record collecting, it was then a slow process beginning to replace those CD-R copies with originals after entering working life in early adulthood... and of course there was a ceaseless stream of brand new stuff to discover and purchase!

So yes, you just didn't end up buying every record of interest or perhaps even holding an original in your hands, as it might've been a copy of a copy that your friend borrowed from a classmate. (Such was the case with Birdflesh's "Night of the Ultimate Mosh", which found its way to our Lohja posse thanks to a few dudes who later ended up forming Third Man Down.) Hell, I still don't even own the "From Crust 'til Grind" compilation, and "Psychotic Veterinarian" remains the one early Rotten Sound EP that I haven't managed to hunt down yet!

However, "Exit" I did buy upon its release, and the album blew me away. Even got the album-themed shirt that I dream about fitting in again one day... "Exit" remains my favorite Rotisko full-length, and it's the one I most often revisit. While you can pick up any release of theirs from the 2000s and it'll deliver crazy-tight and furious modern grindcore, the songwriting on "Exit" simply hasn't been matched by Rotten Sound since. Coincidentally(?), it's also the last recording they did with Kai Hahto on drums.

I believe I found Rotten Sound thru similar channels, although I was the only guy in my social circles who was into most extreme forms of music back then -

most of my metalhead friends thought of Children of Bodom as the most extreme thing in existence. I think it was either Metalliliiitto or another radio show of that day – Rautakanki by Teemu Suominen – that got me exposed to Rotten Sound, or then it was Inferno mag. I recall going to my local library and finding a copy of Rotten Sound album there. "Oh, I know this from somewhere", then went home, gave it a spin but wondering is this the same band everyone seems to be so crazy about? Well, that album was "Under Pressure" – my first introduction to Rotten Sound but certainly not the Rotten Sound record I'd recommend for newbies. I did burn a CD-R copy of that anyway, and eventually replaced it with the real thing... but my collection still lacks "From Crust 'til Grind". The last time I checked Discogs it's actually really expensive nowadays.

I think "Exit" was their magnum opus, both in terms of songwriting and momentum – the latter of which actually lifted them above every other grindcore act back then. But then again, how many Finnish grindcore bands were there back then we haven't mentioned yet? Rotten Sound? Deathbound? Marttyyrioperaatio? Fastforward a few years and then we had a lot of them. "Exit" must have sold "a few" copies back then. But who would resist those Spinefarm ads in back of Inferno magazine?

There was a hype surrounding them, I recall, and most of that stemmed from Kai Hahto's presence. I recall him being in the spotlight than any other member of the band, but I think they just used those initials back then, anyway? There were Kai Hahto drum clinics and his exit from post-"Exit" Rotten Sound sure was a media sensation as was his introduction to Wintersun. My metalhead friend from my high school really thought Hahto's talent went to waste in Rotten Sound and he really reinvented himself in Wintersun. I think that summarizes something about that era. Sami Latva certainly had big shoes to fill, but I think he's the right man for the job. It's a shame that I haven't found any Rotten Sound as good as I found "Exit", but that might be about the songwriting, clinging to nostalgia or some other factor I can't take into equation right now.

Ah, I can relate to being involuntarily solitary in your more extreme musical interests. I mean, my older sister and some of her high-school friends played a significant part in my initiation to metal, even introducing me to some underground black metal bands such as Enochian Crescent, but they thought that Rotten Sound was just noisy garbage, haha!

Had to revisit "Under Pressure" and "Drain" now while typing this, it's been a long while... Indeed, "Under Pressure" doesn't seem like the ideal debut full-length or starting point for a new listener: the recording falls short of the unhinged fury of the preceding EPs, and the 40-minute playing time of the album doesn't exactly help. (An admittedly common "sin" of the time, though... Nasum's masterful "Inhale / Exhale" clocks at nearly 45!) The superiority of the "Loosin' Face" EP becomes even more evident with "Under Pressure" featuring less intense re-recordings of several of its tracks, such as "Corporate Fuck". The second full-length "Drain", then again, is a different beast, and clearly Rotten Sound's most (death) metallic moment: lots of mid-tempo heaviness, Entombed-ish thick Sunlight production... there's even a second guitarist! Interesting to think that Rotisko released such an album in the late 90s, when death metal was all but dead in Finland.

"Murderworks" and "Exit" are the albums that really defined Rotten Sound, and I doubt they can ever top them in my book. It's fair to say that certain Mieszko Talarczyk played no small part in this, capturing both records at his Soundlab Studios. You can see a refinement in other aspects of the band around this time as well, with the albums being more thought-out visually, and the members adopting their one-letter pseudonyms. I also remember the band sporting the butcher look at their Murderworks-era gigs, covered in gore and wearing stylish aprons adorned with the Rotten Sound logo.

I recall a similar drummer hype around Kaitsu, I think that's when his name became widely known among metalheads. A somewhat silly idea that his talent would've been "going to waste" in Rotten Sound, though, as he was constantly playing different styles in different line-ups ever since the 90s, also including stuff completely outside of metal. Quite the opposite, I think Kaitsu brought something valuable to every band that he played in, always serving the complete artistic outcome. There is a kind of catchy groove to his grindcore drumming, and while his skill shines through clearly, he never strays off into unnecessary instrumental wankery. And then if you listen to his playing on Enochian Crescent's debut "Telocvovim", for instance, there are carefully progressive percussive bits added in from time to time, but without stealing the show. No wonder the guy went on to drum for much bigger bands.

Talking about Finnish grind could be an article of its own entirely... It was a highly marginal subgenre around here still in the early 2000s, but upon a closer look, there were more bands in the underground than you'd initially think. Hostile Regression even put out the "Grind War Finland" split CD with Irritate, Murder Company, Drunk Junkees (who later became Bud Junkees) and Emulgator back in 2000! There were bands more closely affiliated with the punk scene such as Positive Bastards, Officer Down, or even Ristisaatto, and on the other hand, you had a couple of deviants doing the porn and gore stuff: Torsofuck we've all heard of by now, Inferia never called it quits, and even Creamface is worth mentioning, having always been strongly rooted in the sound of old-school grindcore despite its themes. Also kudos to CF for rescuing the Nekro-Torso gems from utter obscurity! But yes, back then your average metalhead would only be perhaps aware of Rotten Sound, Deathbound, and, let us not forget, Cause for Effect.



All of those bands you mentioned were strictly underground stuff. My knowledge at the time was limited to those mainstream(ish) artist, but I'm pretty sure I was digging into some Mikseri.net grindcore as well. Can't remember any of those, though. All I can say for certain that I got into Cause for Effect, Positive Bastards and Ristisaatto a lot later on, as I wasn't cultivated enough to look at the other side of the fence too often. I didn't do so until a bit later. Well, Rotten Sound certainly came from that direction, considering the sound they had on "Sick Bastard".

I agree with you about Kai Hahto. He has certainly given something to every project he's been involved with, but you can say that his grindcore style was refined by "Exit" as far as possible. I mean, you can ever "hear" that he barely sweats when he was laying his tracks. It all sounds very natural, but there's still these sick drum fills and other quirks that can equally flow unnoticed, if you don't pay attention.

On the other hand – and now we can actually

proceed to the subject we even arranged this discussion in the first place – "Psychotic Veterinarian" is a different beast altogether. That one's primal, but not chaotic... when it comes to the songs themselves, that is.

Indeed, "Psychotic Veterinarian" finds Rotten Sound at an ideal balance between the raw crusty energy of their early days and the tightly grinding frenzy that they would become known for. Being the band's first recording with Kai Hahto behind the kit, I'm inclined to give him a fair deal of the credit, and recording the EP live in the studio surely helped with capturing the intensity. All in all, everything just clicks on "Psychotic Veterinarian": the production is organically punchy and distinct, the songwriting is infectious and to-the-point (Just listen to that friggin' moshpart in the middle of "Cry", and how the song speeds back up to its climax!), Keijo's vocal delivery is at its most diverse and maniacal... grindcore doesn't get much better than this.

It's interesting to compare "Psychotic Veterinarian" to its predecessor "Sick Bastard", originally recorded as a demo in '93. During the circa two years between the recordings, the rhythm section of the band has changed, English (or Finnish, rather) has been adopted as the lyrical language, and the musical style has begun shifting more onto the grinding side. As you might already guess based on the EP title, one thing that remains is the juvenile humor, with most of the lyrics dealing with sex and violence in a tongue-in-cheek manner. However, it's not all goofy, as "Observers" in particular foreshadows the more serious conceptual turn to come, dealing with the ills of surveillance society.

Funnily enough, as I've always listened to "Psychotic Veterinarian" through its inclusion on "From Crust 'til Grind", I've almost entirely missed out on the hilarious oral sound effects in between the songs... until I looked up the original recording on YouTube today, that is! (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL171575E24CF4F105>) I suppose the band had had enough of the joke by '03, as most of the animal and explosion imitations were removed when the recording was reissued on the compilation CD, which conveniently omitted the lyrics as well? Such revisionism!

I recall that such revisionism took place back then, as it was during those days when you found out about the existence of pre-"Cowboys from Hell" era Pantera albums as well. Even now you can remove some parts of your discography from your Bandcamp page and pretend nothing ever existed, but the Internet certainly remembers everything. I recall reading an interview, possible made during "Exit" era, in which "Psychotic Veterinarian" was discussed and they didn't exactly felt that those "animal explosion sound effects" were necessary. It's a rare occasion that "skits" such as those work, but in this case, I find them funny and an integral part of "Psychotic Veterinarian".

I can also understand if you don't regard such track such as "Police Raped a Pensioner" or "Anal Sadist" in high regard, concerning their lyrics that is! If you ask me, those tracks are still top-notch crusty grindcore. I can also relate to the possible of outlook on "Psychotic Veterinarian" as somewhat of an "we were still kind of searching for our direction" kind of phase. I think it wasn't until "Under Pressure" when they had dropped at least most of their most obvious humor.

I managed to source a copy of "Psychotic Veterinarian", or at least the version possibly ripped from the original CD version by SOA Records, as it had all those cool sound effects. I mean, now it's extremely easy to get hold of, for an example, Grausamkeit or Moonblood discography and to claim expertise on the subject in a matter of minutes, but it wasn't that easy to get hold of unedited version of "Psychotic Veterinarian". THOSE WERE THE OLD DAYS!

In those pre-YouTube days, you had to rely on what you could get your hands on through contacts, P2P file sharing, or mp3 blogs and forums, so easy access to such obscure recordings was hardly a given. More fruitful times for revisionism, then! Here I went over two decades without hearing the full original version of "Psychotic Veterinarian", so I guess it worked... But perhaps it's understandable that the band would've preferred to tone down the comical impression of the recording in retrospect, as the material was placed right in the beginning of "From Crust 'til Grind". The non-chronological ordering of the different recordings on the compilation is interesting, also in that the disc closes with the contrast between the earliest and the latest EP, with the crusty rawness of "Sick Bastard" followed by the sharp deathgrind of "Still Psycho". But it works very well, highlighting the evolution of Rotten Sound during their first decade of existence.

Anyway, the adolescent humor is certainly an important part of early Rotten Sound. "Sick Bastard" wouldn't be the same without the absurd Finnish lyrics (Keijo laulaa papit hirteen...), and the switch to not-so-fluent English on "Psychotic Veterinarian" hardly made the texts any more serious. On "Loosin' Face", the lyrics took a clear sociopolitical turn, even if the EP closes with the band poking fun at black metal penguins with the bursts "Veenom" and "Burtsum", followed by the synth-BM surprise "A Religion?". A late footnote in the 90's Dark War between Finland and Norway, ha?

**"No perkulkes, nytpäs
grindaa taas. Pussi
päähän ja piippu
suuhun niin johan
helpottaa."**

Of corpse, one aspect of "Psychotic Veterinarian" that begs mentioning is the cover art, courtesy of Tomi "Lordi" Putaansuu. There's a skeleton, a zombie, a clown getting his brains blown out, a creepy-ass teddy bear(?) eyeing at you... cool, right?! However, what all this has to do with a psychotic veterinarian, or what that title has to do with anything really, remains a mystery.

Scars of war never heal, especially those gained in Dark War, be it physical or mental... speaking of mental well-being, that cover art is certainly worth mentioning. Can't say if that motley crew on the cover are the clients of the psychotic veterinarian him/herself, psychotic visions or if they ARE the psychotic veterinarian, for they are many. By the way, have you noticed that creepy steroid-ass teddy bear is alone on the back sleeve, suggesting that he IS the psychotic veterinarian? Anyway, Rotten Sound certainly didn't had such a cartoonish vibe on any of their recordings after that!

There's two versions of "Psychotic Veterinarian"; the CD version came first in 1995 and the 7" version two years later. Both of those were on SOA Records. I own the 7" version. I can't wrap my head around the fact that cover art on 7" version is totally fucked up, in a bad way. It's like it's printed on a printer at the label's local library, it's as shoddy in real life as it is on Discogs. The minute I opened the parcel (I had to buy it from a foreign seller, of course) containing that 7" with that sleeve I thought I was scammed.

Well, at least the 7" itself was as promised, and the sleeve was, really, something it was "supposed" to be. Well, I have once bought a copy of Nasum's "Helvete" from a local flea market only to find out it did actually contain one of those 2000s Ozzy Osbourne albums inside. That's why you should always check what's inside the CD cases when you are on a hunt!

Speaking of Cds, the original CD version of that recording is actually spelled "Psychotic Veterinarian" on the spine, and according to Discogs, the whole EP plays as just one track. Sometimes you just never get it right!

The plot sickens... When you take into account the homeless/undead-looking rabbit on the lyric sleeve as well, I suppose these could indeed be the patients of the Psychotic Veterinarian? Oh well, Lordi only knows! But the cartoonish artwork IS friggin' cool and a great match with the youthfully unhinged vibe of the recording. Too bad the label (and whoever is to be blamed for the layout) handled the release in such an authentically unprofessional underground fuck-up fashion.

I noticed that the credits simply state "recorded live in a studio", but as I was revisiting the Vaasa chapter of the "Rotting Ways to Misery: The History of Finnish Death Metal" book just now, there's Keijo reminiscing how "Psychotic Veterinarian" was recorded during the same visit to Tico-Tico Studios as Vomiturition's sole full-length "A Leftover". As the two bands had largely the same members back then, apparently several Rotten Sound releases of the time were recorded at Vomiturition's studio sessions - doing the Rotisko stuff was just way quicker and more fun!

In the aforementioned book, Keijo also mentions how the idea to start a crust/grind project that would eventually become Rotten Sound can be traced back to the recording session of Vomiturition's "Head Tales" in '93. This makes total sense when you listen to "Olet vitun tyhmä", the closing track of that mini-album, which is right in line with early Rotten Sound with its crustgrind style and humorous Finnish lyrics!

A classic example of a "side project with humorous overtones in it gradually becoming the main dish" case? It has happened even before Vomiturition/Rotten Sound and will happen again. I must say I'm not sorry how the things have evolved for Rotten Sound after those wacky sessions... how about you?

While I find myself returning to the early Rotisko recordings much more often than anything that they have released in the last 15+ years, releases such as "Sick Bastard" and "Psychotic Veterinarian", in all their glorious ferocity, are strongly products of their time. I mean, it would be pointless to try recapturing or replicating that youthful tongue-in-cheek vigour when you're in your 50s, and I doubt the band would be going in its fourth decade of existence, had they not taken things into a more serious direction quite early on. And they surely haven't softened with age.

In fact, it's likely that those early crustgrind gems would've been even more forgotten in underground obscurity if Rotten Sound had ended up changing their name or calling it quits early on. So, also in that sense, I'm glad that they've kept grinding on for so long, deservedly becoming one of the most prominent names in today's grindcore scene internationally. But hey, the early stuff MUST be properly reissued again, as even "From Crust 'til

Grind" is long out of print by now!

I should add that every gig I've seen from Rotten Sound over the years has been a powerful reminder of their continued relevance, as they always deliver. And I've seen around twenty of them by now, haha... I think it's time for another one this November, actually, when they're playing a few dates with Massgrav. Also, it's cool to see that the band remains in touch with their roots, as you can still occasionally hear an oldie like "Koiranyrjö" in their live set.

Yes, I have too enjoyed seeing them play, even if their later recorded work doesn't resonate with me as much as even "Exit" did. Speaking of which, what do you think of them, and what is your favorite post-"Exit" work? I need to contemplate my answer for a while...

Hmmm, indeed... picking a favorite "newer" Rotisko release isn't such an easy task, as none of them feel personally significant. However, it's a matter of timing more than anything else, as my own sonic preferences had begun shifting towards rawer forms of expression already by the time that "Exit" came out - a relatively natural evolution of a young enthusiast digging constantly deeper into the underground.

Had I heard e.g. "Cycles" in my early teens, I'm fairly sure the album would've blown me away and become a personal classic.

I still kept on buying each new release up to including the "Species at War" EP, but after that, I stopped, realizing how rarely I would revisit anything that came after "Exit" anyway. The band keeps on putting out high-quality modern grindcore, but that's just it, I don't really have as much of a taste for the more polished stuff anymore. Olden goldies such as "Exit", or Nasum's "Human 2.0", still get me going, of corpse, but with new releases, I'm more picky.

However, it was clear that I would have to pick one of the EPs, as I feel that the compact format preserves the band's intensity the best. Rather an EP that leaves you hungry and forces you to press play again than a full-length that has you losing concentration halfway through, you know? So, I'd say "Napalm", as "Dead Remains" is perhaps my favorite number from Rotten Sound's newer oeuvre, and the latter half of Napalm Death covers is guaranteedly killer, hahaha. But if that feels almost like cheating, then it's "Species at War" - that's eight tight minutes with a good balance between straight-ahead grinding and mid-tempo moments that will have your head nodding. I'm also reminded of a cool gig that I saw from them on the release mini-tour alongside Victims and Speedtrap (the skull flyer is staring at me from the door of my refridgerator).

Now that you mentioned it, I saw one of those mini-tour shows as well, in Tampere, as I was living in there at the time. Back then I had time and interest to go and see almost every possible show that I had possibilites to attend to, nowadays I've had to become more picky. However, skipping their latest show in Hämeenlinna a couple of years ago is something I kinda regret.

It seems I haven't missed out on much, since the only Rotten Sound release I have not heard is the "Apocalypse" album, and that is easy to fix. (And it was. Also, this album seems to be one of their better post-"Exit" recorded works. -Ed.) It seems that their days of churning out new stuff almost annually are long gone now. I think I'm balancing between



"Piiput suuhun niin johan kummasti helpottuu olo keskellä ankarintakin kaamosta. Tammikuun 5. päivä rappukäytävissä roiskuu ja seiniltä kaabitaan talteen 18 grindin herkkupalaa!"

"Consume to Contaminate" and "Species at War", as well. Out of the full-length albums I think I have to go with "Cursed" and I think I can agree with your sentiment about the length of their albums, although "Cycles" is their only post-"Murderworks" album to date to total over 30 minutes in length... but I guess it boils down to changes in my taste in noise, in general...

But how about their legacy? I think the post-"Murderworks" Rotten Sound is the most audible musical influence in modern grindcore, and you can hardly hear any "Psychotic Veterinarian" influence in any band... or can you?

That sounds about right, Rotisko's influence has been first and foremost through the HM-2 grind sound they've established in the new millennium. I'd be inclined to rank Nasum as even more influential in modern grindcore, but of course, their final recordings and Mieszko's passing were already two decades ago. For all those years, Rotten Sound has been grinding on and inspiring countless new bands along the way - and it's quite telling that it was Keijo whom Nasum recruited to handle the vocals on their posthumous farewell tour in 2012.

On their home turf, Rotten Sound's influence is unparalleled for sure, as obviously audible in most of the Finnish grindcore bands that began popping up en masse in the wake of "Exit". If there's one name to highlight among this Grindcore Finland wave, it's Feastem. Not just because they're one of the few bands out of those that are still around, but because, in Feastem's case, I'd even be inclined to talk about the student becoming the master. They've run with the sound and made it their own, combining maximum intensity with top-notch songwriting. The result is ripping and recognizable.

But as for the influence of "Psychotic Veterinarian", or early Rotisko in general, I can't really think of any clear examples, in Finland or elsewhere... Positive Bastards' crustgrind was musically in the same ballpark, but that has probably more to do with the shared influence of classic bands such as Extreme Noise Terror. PB were strongly rooted in punk with their raw sound and serious lyrics after all, so the vibe is significantly different from the tight musicianship, clear production and juvenile humor of "Psychotic Veterinarian". I guess what we're getting at is that Rotten Sound's second release was quite the happy accident, turning out brilliant and unique enough for two nerds to rant about it for pages on end almost 30 years after the fact?

For some reason I have always thought Nasum and Rotten Sound are on the same level. Usually you can't find a nowadays grindcore fan who's the fan of the other but despise another, or then they are living in the state of denial. Yes, Nasum was on the game on more serious bases a bit earlier, but their career was cut short too soon... and with Mieszko Talarczyk, the grindcore superstar, handling the production on Rotten Sound albums is yet another example of their crossing paths.

Generally speaking, I guess "Psychotic Veterinarian" is one of those forgotten and rotten gems not too many seem to be aware of or aren't interested in hearing it. I have even met quite plenty of Rotten Sound fans who have not heard "Psychotic Veterinarian", and while it's certainly not a challenge to hear it from somewhere these days, it seems that hearing it isn't always on top people's bucket lists.

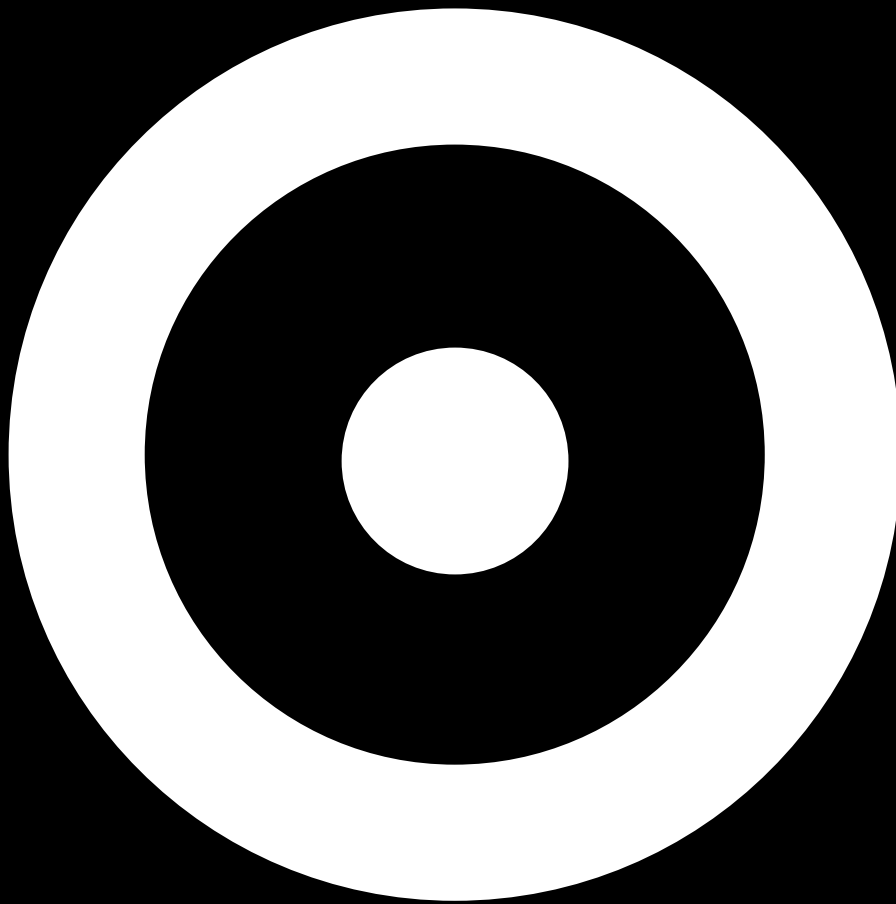
I'm not implying it's on the "if you have decided to appreciate just one Rotten Sound recording make sure it's "Psychotic Veterinarian"!!!" on the pedestal, but I still think it's something people who are not that knee-deep in Rotten Sound or even get rash from modern grindcore would enjoy!

Although Nasum and Rotten Sound started around the same time and crossed paths later on in more ways than one, they took significantly different routes to get there. Nasum was about serious political grindcore from the get-go, and whereas their take on the style developed notably over the years, it was a natural and coherent evolution with barely any shots missed. Nasum's first release was a split with Agathocles, they got signed by Relapse already for the debut full-length, and the band went through only few line-up changes during their career - you could say they had everything going for them until tragedy struck abruptly in December 2004. Rotten Sound, on the other hand, took their sweet time to find their "true form": fittingly, the bio on their Bandcamp even mentions how the band considers "Murderworks" their debut album. So, out of these two grindcore heavyweights, Rotisko is clearly the lillebror, who's just a bit slow and goofy.

Yeah, I suppose Rotten Sound's 90's material in general is overlooked by many of those who appreciate their later recordings. That must be largely due to the pre-"Murderworks" stuff having stayed out of sight, out of mind for many years: most of the early recordings haven't remained consistently in print, and the band understandably concentrates on newer and more relevant material in their live repertoire. Actually, the only time I recall hearing anything off "Psychotic Veterinarian" live was at the band's 20th anniversary gig in 2013, where they played two different sets, with the first one featuring the "Exit" line-up and spanning their career thoroughly up to that album. Now what a show that was! But you're right, "Psychotic Veterinarian" has the kind of balance between raw energy, catchy songwriting and relatively high production values that it's easily recommended listening to anyone with an ear for grindcore or interest in the history of Finnish extreme music. A fun underground curiosity for sure, but also one damn fine recording.

...and I think that nails it. It was fun talking with you about the subject. Thanks and all the best!

Thank you, always happy to rant about such an important subject. To anyone still reading this who isn't so familiar with the beginnings of Rotten Sound, go do your homework on YouTube, it'll be worth it. I also recommend checking out the Jatkuva Hulluus demo from '91, which even I hadn't heard until I discovered it there recently. Until we grind again!



"I find modern living highly oppressive to the point where it infringes upon people's happiness and perspective of life. There are absolutely no values presented in our everyday life."

Cold Inside might have been the very first Finnish metallic hardcore band I had witnessed playing live. This happened in the summer of 2009 during the last Thrashwax Fest that was organized in Pori, Finland. I had been attending metal and punk shows for years, but metallic hardcore was somewhat new to me – I hadn't listened to it and there was no bands or related shows in Hämeenlinna, since bands like Left Cold and Long Gone surfaced a bit later. Even if I didn't have any prior experience seeing metallic hardcore shows, I knew Cold Inside was in the core of it... but simultaneously operating on its periphery. Something oddly familiar, but deeply unique. A night to remember.

Fast-forward a few months and I relocated to Pori to reside there for a couple of years. I can't say I enjoyed those years wholeheartedly, even if I got a degree and some invaluable contacts and acquaintances. During those few years Lauri Suvanto, the vocalist of Cold Inside, became one of those figures I'm more than happy to acquaintances with. Sometime later I got to know Miikka as well, who, along with Lauri and Janne, participated in this interview. As of 2024 they might be as topical as ever.

Greetings. How are you? How life treats you?

Lauri: I am doing very well, thank you. We are working on stuff that is happening later this year: "SELF" lp and release shows. At some point in 2025 we are starting to put new songs together for future release. It's a great time for the band.

Cold Inside has been in existence for a long time. What do you think contributes to band's longevity? Even though we haven't got accustomed to get new Cold Inside records annually or witnessing the live performances every weekend, the band has always been in existence. Lurking in the shadows, waiting...

Lauri: Friendship between the people in the band and our personal and collective relationship with Cold Inside. Along with those I would say authenticity – we do what we do and there is value in that experience. After 20 years I'd also say that there is a collective experience happening that includes the people who come to see the band live and the band has had a fairly big influence on people's lives.

While it has never been the "scene favorite" in a manner such as some albums by eg. Bolt, St. Hood or Ratface, "The Things I Failed to Tell You" still considered as a cornerstone and a majestic landmark album in the Finnish dark hardcore, including yours truly. What do you think of this?

Lauri: Nice that you feel that way, thank you. When the record came out there was a variety of unorthodox things we did and it really stood out. Younger people don't have that perspective and that most likely evens things out now. We were around 25 at the time and that album really goes all in with its approach. It brought variety into the mix what Hardcore in Finland is.

What do you personally think of "The Things I Failed to Tell You" now, 15 years after it's seen the light of day?

Lauri: That album has a very distinct way of dealing with subject matters emotionally and I would say that no other band went about things like that before us in Finland. From the conversations I've had with people who came to shows just before 2010 that LP apparently had a huge impact on the younger kids at the time since it combined genuinely relatable subject matter with a metallic sound. The album was hugely influenced by American bands, but we were seen as these sad guys from the north. We played live quite a lot at that point and it was really a great vibe, I met great people then and some of them are still my friends.

In 2021, you released a new album and your first work since "The Things I Failed to Tell You", carrying the name "Self". What was the creative process for that album?

Lauri: "Northern Overture" and "Poets Are Dead And The Pigs Have Taken Over" were tracks that myself and Janne were practicing already during the time when we played release shows for the first lp.

"SELF" is an experience with very non-linear history. The writing process goes back to 2008 and now it is coming out in 2024 as a physical release. It is a reservoir of human experience, some of them extremely happy and some extremely miserable.

It is a road map of sixteen years and whatever you can make of that is presented in those seven songs. After the recordings were finished I had very little interest in touching the thing for a fair period of time, it's very intense and overdriven which is practically an exact

match to how people perceived us.

There's four songs by myself, two from Miikka and one from Eetu who plays guitar on "SELF". We put a lot of effort and intent in practicing those seven tracks and the musicianship is still something I admire when listening to "SELF". Everything just comes together there. For the tracks I wrote the main musical influences were Burning Spirits bands and Black Metal.

Lyricaly it follows a person experiencing himself through human emotions such as love for another person, later experiencing alienation from the values of the society and finally abandoning the expectations to be part of that society. Janne came up with the title and the visual imagery.

There's this three-song arc titled "The World With No End". How did this come along?

Lauri: There's an ideological claim in our society that we are able to achieve happiness by taking part in work life, studying, traveling etc, but if we look at these things neutrally we see that they simply do not produce happiness at all. "The World With No End" presents this reality – it simply presents the individual as the main product of that ideology.

These pieces are heavily influenced by Guy Debord, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Rainer Werner Fassbinder – all who I highly admire for their open contempt for power structures and how they work visually with ideas of power, control and the individual.

I find modern living highly oppressive to the point where it infringes upon people's happiness and perspective of life. There are absolutely no values presented in our everyday life.

"The World With No End" is also presented in our latest work "The Waters Cease" where there's an extra track called "Rope (The World With No End)" that pieces together the sentiment from "SELF" with themes of the Bhagavad Gita, more accurately "The Three Modes of Material Nature".

On the other hand, there's this song "Some Things Stay Young" that hits the magical 10-minute mark. That's another thing you don't see within hardcore context every day.

Lauri: It's a place in your mind where everything that has existed is happening at the same time with no end.

"Self" is a fully fledged Cold Inside album, no doubt about it. Although, I must say that the cover art is somewhat peculiar, even by Cold Inside standards. It's very simplistic, but I can think of a few associations; on the other hand, it looks like some standard placeholder album art for Mikseri.net, Spotify or some other music websites. On the other hand, there comes along similarities with the work of New Order, some kind of present-day equivalent for the iconic "Blue Monday" 12" single sleeve (despite the fact that 5¼ inch floppy disks usually contain data instead of music). Is there a message hidden in the cover art, something more than meets the eye?

Janne: In design work I tend to operate in a fairly straightforward manner. Things appear quite quickly and are accepted as they are, without excessive rework. I try to let the unconscious (or store consciousness) do its thing. The cover art of "SELF" is really the embodiment of such expression.

The symbol itself is a version of the symbol of the Self,

used in both Jungian and Buddhist symbology structures. As laid out on the cover, it demands concentration to the substance itself, ascetically, without any boasting nature of album covers mostly found in the genre.

So far, "Self" has been released only in digital format. Do you feel it has reached it's intended audience and gotten the attention it deserves? Do you think there's a risk of digital only releases fading into obscurity more easily than those released in physical format?

Lauri: As I write this the LP is out and we have played one out of three "SELF" live shows. As strange as it may sound this is the perfect time to release the album. People who have seen us play this year have said that the band has never sounded so tight live. It's a perspective that just adds to the idea of releasing "SELF" now. There's a variety of people included in making "SELF" so it's nice to see it presented like this.

Your latest offering "The Waters Cease" seems and even "easy listening" stuff compared to some of your previous outings. I can hear a significant "Seasons in the Size of Days" era Integrity influence in there, that's for sure. How would you describe the musical approach of "The Waters Cease"?

Miikka: The process of writing for "The Waters Cease" started with "A Mode", which was originally requested for a 7" compilation that never seemed to manifest, so we decided to leave ourselves out and use the song for our own EP. The request for the comp was to keep the songs around the 1 minute mark, so I ended up writing a really barebones hardcore song with no repeating parts, in a somewhat similar mode (pun intended) as our first 7". That sort of became the theme for the EP; to bring the rawness of our early days to a contemporary setting, and recording at Black Floyds Analog Audio supported that vision. The rest of the material I had already partially written and "Church Of No Image" we had already played live some years before. The intro owes a lot to Slayer and old death metal, the rest of the song probably takes some notes from the Cleveland hardcore book of riffs. "Fetish Object" was the last track to be finished, and it owes a lot to the Earache Records bands I listened to as a kid (especially Napalm Death's "Harmony Corruption" & Entombed's "Wolverine Blues"). "The Waters Of River Jordan..." for me, is a meeting of Japanese hardcore and True Blue. Ultimately, everything I write for Cold Inside can probably be traced back to Slayer, Cro-Mags & Discharge.

One step forward, two steps back, or the other way around? What is your take on "development", or evolution if that term fits here? At least I tend to think that going forward doesn't mean that you have to progress and leapfrog your own achievements.

Lauri: I mentioned authenticity earlier and that carries more importance than the idea of how the music should sound like. There's a lot of musical skill in Cold Inside and with that the arrangement makes the majority of the music you hear. If we feel that we are doing good music then we are doing it the correct way.

I couldn't help but notice that songs have been usually credited to Cold Inside as a whole, but this time they were credited to Miikka for the songwriting and Lauri for the lyrics. Has this always been like this or have you adjusted your ways to create new music deliberately?

Lauri: We just didn't have a system for that and it's naturally appropriate to pay a bit more attention to that also. Miikka usually has the song pieced out and we go straight to arrangement. I write the lyrics after we have fleshed out the song a bit. The vocals follow the drums, or work together with the drums rather than following the guitar riff. But pretty traditional working methods.

Those blues and folk influences that were present on "The Things I Failed to Tell You" seem to have gone, but I got the impression that Lauri had another outlet to concentrate on that kind of music. Was it necessary to remove them from Cold Inside or are the just hibernating?

Lauri: Blues and Folk fall in the line of traditional, or people's music where the topics of songs are universal. I would say musically apart from Hardship Blues there are no musical elements present from neither, the clean vocals are influences from Sheer Terror mainly and bring more color to the lyrical context.

The part where people considered us French New Wave, Film Noir or Blues fanatics was not emphasized by us. The lyrical themes of "The Things I Failed To Tell You" are also in the line of Folk tradition, so for people who listen to or relate to music like that it was easy to see the connection. I also think that we have been fairly

open about our influences and how that translates into our music. Myself and Janne listened to a lot of Delta Blues during those years, we also used "folksy" opening songs for our sets which I would believe put us more in that perspective. I think now 15 years later it is easier for people to see that there is a thematic legacy in what we do. For me it has been a tool for personal realization.

Musically "The Waters Cease" is more straightforward and maybe that's the reason why it just translates differently, however I consider it follows the same heritage with references to places like Jordan etc.

I'll get back to cover art and especially symbolism. For an example, there was a leviathan cross on your Bandcamp single "The Waters of River Jordan as Blood", which, in turn, also hold some meanings to it. Do they hold any significant meaning to you?

Janne: This one came out pretty much on autopilot as well. The symbol of sulfur in alchemical context is the spiritual analogy for the human soul. The context starts to shift here, as a transitional phase between the two releases.

"The Waters Cease" cover art also has some symbolism in it. I got to admit that I'm not familiar with all the nuances in this imagery, but there seems to be a double-ended cross broken in two, dividing waters that separate two cities or parts of a city. I can't say that in it's symbolism it doesn't remind me



of Moses and the division of the Red sea.

Janne: The Cross of Lorraine has been in use since the days of recording "SELF" and it's been featured on shirts and posters magically created by Eetu Blomqvist, our guitar player at the time. It holds value to the band. Henceforth the new interpretation of form arose.

On "The Waters Cease" the cross represents the symbol of the Christian cross. The two-sidedness brings forth the thought of the most gruesome and cruel torturing devices of the oppressive government transmutating a human into god through the power of inner experience of surrender.

I feel the modern society is, in many ways, operating in a similar fashion, as the things and experiences people tend to pursue hold innate torture, through which the truth can be perceived. To see the fullness of things, you must perceive the emptiness also.

Do you see that Cold Inside has some spirituality in it? My perception is that there is at some level of it, since there are personal projections channeled through Cold Inside and also this kind of hardcore is more or less accustomed to deliver such themes. Or do you prefer to keep your personal beliefs separate from Cold Inside?

Lauri: Spirituality is the main ingredient of Cold Inside, "SELF" is the first piece where it all comes together. I put a lot of thought into how the lyrics come out, I have no interest in presenting myself as a political influencer or a spiritual guide. However I try to communicate genuine human experience and be very upfront about it.

"SELF" explores human alienation in a wide spectrum, or more precisely reasons why someone experiences alienation. With "The Waters Cease" the spiritual element, the person himself seeks to understand or transcend the material reality. There is no political commentary in our songs that stems from the sphere of democracy and in that sense "The Waters Cease" presents the so called reality of things as the core problem of our grief.

Like with every other influence we have been transparent with the spiritual aspect as it is a fundamental part. Lyrically and vocally I try to be upfront and intense and similarly respect the collective thing that is Cold Inside – we don't sell people ideas and there is no agenda. I aim to write stuff that is accessible, the rest I still leave for the listener.

Miikka: Life itself is spiritual and what we express through art is an extension of our spirit and consciousness. Hardcore may seem materialistic and atheistic to many, but the element of spirituality and soul expression has always been there from the start.

From your point of view, does spirituality have its place in hardcore? It is often overlooked or even frowned upon within hardcore, which often deals with more tangible topics, such as everyday life, politics, personal struggles, interaction with your surroundings and dynamics in the scene (Fruitful subjects like stabs in the back or poser-bashing).

Lauri: Animal rights and drug free lifestyle themes can be seen as spiritual topics since they deal with non-materialism, so I would say it is about what is your understanding of what is spiritual.

Society generally favors materialistic values over spirituality and naturally Hardcore deals with the same topics. Materialism cultivates behavior where a person safeguards his ego heavily and people easily see spiritual traditions as conservative, exploitative or generally repressive. Because of this I completely understand why people do not like to deal with these topics.

Miikka: To the extent that hardcore relates to topics of life (and how to live it) or death (and how to face it), it is spiritual in its essence. Whether or not spirituality has a place in hardcore is a non-issue for me; spirituality has been a foundational element of hardcore punk from the start.

Are you in contact with the contemporary hardcore scene, apart from playing shows alongside with some of them? Do you follow the scene?

Lauri: Yes, I organize shows and try to use my skills to make more room for all ages shows in the future. There have been two periods in my life when I was basically nonexistent, but I feel that now there is work to be done and I can assist with stuff. Hardcore as culture has changed a lot over the years and now the age range of people at shows is huge. That helps people to work more specifically.

Miikka: Very much so. This is what I've been into since I was a kid, and what has shaped me into the adult I am today. As long as I find relatable music and people

within the spectrum of hardcore, I'll remain involved. There is a deep sense of intergenerationality woven into the fabric of hardcore: a continuum of tradition and passing the torch, building on a foundation – yet creating something new in the process. A world with no end.

You claim that you are a "misfit collective". Does that say something about your position within the Finnish hardcore scene or is it just a proclamation about who you are and how you see yourselves as a part of society?

Lauri: It's the type of people I have never met elsewhere in my life.

Lauri is involved with another hardcore band, Warning From Hell. That band plays hardcore too, but has a different approach to it. Is there something with that band you can't achieve with Cold Inside?

Lauri: I have always done music outside Cold Inside since I am very interested in music in general. Cold Inside is the type of an environment where certain elements work and different elements work elsewhere. Janne plays in Mama Longhorn, an Afrobeat band and that has brought a lot of musical elements into his drumming. (Mama Longhorn certainly is a great band. -Ed.) So with other work you get to study what you do and implement it more broadly.



Miikka is a person of multiple hardcore bands and visits to their ranks. Does Cold Inside give you something that you can't achieve with anything else?

Miikka: Cold Inside has been a part of my life for 18 years, and probably the most natural channel to express myself as a guitarist and a songwriter. In one sense, there's really no fixed limitations to what a "Cold Inside song" should sound like, but somehow I know if what I'm writing will fit the band. Aside from Cold Inside, I'm currently doing vocals in Standard, which provides a slightly different angle to hardcore in the tradition of presenting (and preserving) Straight Edge ideals & Bhakti philosophy.

Let's talk a brief moment about your shows. As stated earlier on, there's not much of them in the foreseeable future, and the situation is no different to past. Instead, every time I have seen Cold Inside perform it has felt like a special occasion. How much effort you put into planning the shows beforehand? Are there some form of special ways to prepare for them? Dim lights, use of obscure speech samples as an factor contributing to the overall atmosphere, occasional use of projectors, smell of incense, smoke... like some kind of a ritual that you're more used to see at black metal shows. Alongside with the music itself, I think this is another factor that differentiates Cold Inside from the rest. How important part this is of Cold Inside?

Lauri: We try to present the thing as it is I suppose and the spiritual element mentioned earlier brings it together.

Playing live my position is to do the soundscape stuff and be the singer of the band, so I aim to keep high intensity with what tools I have available. The unpredictability keeps the tension high so there's this certain dynamic flatline that can also be very meditative, like a psychological roadmap.

Extra audio work live always revolves around a theme that is in direct link with our music. I usually pass on the idea that I have for the soundscape stuff live, but that's it. I believe the other people in this band trust my decision on that issue and I can work pretty freely with stuff like this. I know it is our band, not mine. Musically there is as much room as anybody wants to take.

There's a very unconventional history when it comes to our live shows stemming from extremely passive to extremely aggressive. It's nice to hear that there is stuff you can take away from the live experience, since the content of the music deals with human experience as well.

Conversely, has the nature of Cold Inside shows caused any misunderstandings, misinterpretation or downright ridicule during the years?

Lauri: Naturally yes and if people find us a bit questionable it comes from here. However we are still here and there seems to be relevance to it, so it is easier to focus on that and these are the people who should be into what we do. We had a six year gap of not playing shows and in 2024 I find people are very responsive to what we do.

What is your relation to Integrity? One can't deny the obvious Integrity influences in music and in spirit, but after all, we're talking about a band that had it's ups and downs, their take on hardcore is not certainly for everybody and they still manage to create mixed feelings towards them. How has your perception of them changed throughout the years? Has their recent acts and doings affected the way you value them?

Lauri: I think that whole comparison came when there was a peak in Clevo style sound for a bit of time in

Finland and we played that type of sound. Our hometown Pori was also known as a Metalcore city then.

Miikka: Integrity was definitely a major inspiration when I started writing for Cold Inside, and soundwise/aesthetically we definitely share a lot of common influences, from 80's American hardcore to Japanese hardcore, neofolk, experimental music and esoteric themes. I don't really bother with what Dwid is currently pursuing with Integ, but hearing them play the hits is always enjoyable. Other Clevo classics like Ringworm, In Cold Blood, Face Value, Confront and OLC have always been in heavy rotation for me. I see many commonalities between Cleveland and Pori/Tampere historically as industrial working class cities with small and thus mixed subculture scenes contributing to varying influences, there's also a sense of desperation and bleakness that comes through in the music. (Good point. -Ed.)

On "The Things I Failed to Tell You" LP there was a download code to download the album. While this wasn't entirely revolutionary back in the day, it certainly wasn't a standard either. There's no physical release of "Self" at all at this point. What is your relation to physical copies? Do you need to prove that band has existed and left it's mark in the world?

Miikka: The download code was an initiative from our label back then, but in general I see downloads and streaming services as a practical way of getting the music out and utilized in everyday life. A physical release is still essential to the expression; artwork and lyrics are as much of a part of it as the actual music. That being said, "SELF" is now finally out as an album, and it's definitely a whole concept as it is.

There's a common line of thought within hardcore that if the band isn't releasing new music between short intervals, playing shows rapidly or pushing itself thru social media, it ceases to exist. Thus bands seem to be in a constant loop to prove they still exists. Cold Inside seems to contradict to every single one of those aspects. What do you think?

Lauri: Authenticity, nonconformism and presenting the thing as it is have been our practice and I have applied that practice to every single region of my personal life as well. If any of those items are translated to people coming across our music, live or recorded I believe that suffices. For me, this is what I do and how I am.

How has Pori affected Cold Inside and shaped it? Would Cold Inside exist in some form, if it had been formed anywhere else? There's even this phrase "Pori's violence" attached to Cold Inside. Does that tell something about Cold Inside, Pori, or perhaps both of them? Muna vai kana?

Lauri: From our perspective, being born in the early half of the 80's Pori is a working class town all the way. It was an extremely bleak city to grow up in and it was fairly dangerous. I am thankful that myself and the people closest to me pulled through that.

As you also pointed out, many people say that there's this Black Metal element and I just see that grimness to come from where we are from. It's an abandoned factory floor ambience.

That concluded our interview. Was there anything else left to say?

Lauri: I'd like to thank you for your interest after all these years and for the well placed questions and viewpoints.

Miikka: Thank you and everyone who can somehow relate to this band.



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